

CAPITOL STUFF

By JOHN O'DONNELL

Washington, June 24.—A favorite off-the-record wise-crack often repeated by President Eisenhower's fellow West Point graduates of the Class of 1915 runs to the effect: "The only not so great general ever graduated, but he certainly is the luckiest."

There's a bit of truth in that. With the outbreak of World War I, Eisenhower was thrust over the heads of hundreds of senior U. S. Army officers to become commander of the 101st Airborne Division in Europe. He hoped to be the great Napoleon, who was not in his mind.

"I had no idea," he wrote in his memoirs, "that I was to be the luckiest of men."

And it is all too apparent to the practical politicians of this country that he is just simply a lot of luck. Fickle fortune has deserted him a most important part of his second term in the White House. In January, 1956, he lost the election for re-election to the position of President of the United States to his chief rival, Sen. Adlai Stevenson, a Chicagoan and a Democrat. Boston, which had been a Democratic stronghold, was only the first of a long string of losses.

American politicians like Napoleon—advice and support leaders who are blessed by lady luck or fortune came forth. Ike certainly had political luck and fortune in his nomination battle in the 1952 GOP convention when New Hampshire's Gov. Sherman Adams, along with New York's Gov. Dewey and Massachusetts' Sen. Cabot Lodge, maneuvered the defeat of Mr. Republican, Ohio's Sen. Robert A. Taft.

Then, as in the years before, Ike was blessed by luck. As his opposite British number, Field Marshal Alanbrooke, was to write in his memoirs, "The Turn of the Tide":

"It must be remembered that Eisenhower had never commanded even a battalion in action when he found himself commanding army troops in North Africa. . . . no wonder he was at a loss what to do. . . . He learned a lot during the war—but tactics, strategy and command were never his strong points. . . . He was uncommonly well served by his chief of staff, Gen. Bedell Smith, who had far more flair for military matters than his master. . . . His (Eisenhower's) greatest asset was a greater share of luck than most of us receive in life."

The Staff Job at the White House

The Eisenhower staff continued throughout his first term and his triumphant reelection in 1956. Sherman Adams, always at his elbow, was doing the staff job politically in the White House which Gen. Smith did in the military field when he sat at Eisenhower's right hand in the Allied Headquarters.

Then the Eisenhower political luck flew out the White House window.

The fact is that Ike has been cursed with bad political cards. He was not a natural politician and almost immediately found his campaign promises and pledges turning sour.

Last fall, on the eve of Eisenhower's White House celebration of the first anniversary of his second term election, we made a few observations on the political fortunes which certainly the best of time has not improved. A reporter then noted:

"There will be no political fights for Ike, his Cabinet and the administration. . . . On Wedge day, Nov. 6, when they go to the polls, they will be the only ones who have everything



Gen. Bedell Smith
"Had far more flair" than Ike

Recalling Eisenhower's 1956 Pledges

"What did Ike pledge in 1956 to win the election? Well, there was the pledge of a strong defense with 'the utmost effective guided and ballistic missiles.' And 'further reduction in taxes.' And the promise 'to maintain the purchasing power of a sound dollar.' Your dollar today is worth 3 cents less than it was a year ago today."

"Ike's platform on segregation in schools declared that 'use of force by any group or agency will only tend to worsen the many problems inherent in the situation.' And just before his 1956 election he declared that civil rights questions must be settled 'to the greatest possible extent on a local and state basis.'"

"The Eisenhower platform pledged 'further reduction in government spending.' Last Jan. 16, Eisenhower sent to Congress the biggest peacetime budget in history—\$71.8 billion."

Now the Eisenhower Administration is getting ready to spend somewhere over \$80 billion in the fiscal year starting June 30. On top of this the cost of living has steadily mounted until last month it reached an alltime high.

Why Dems Are Suspiciously Moderate

Meanwhile, the "recession" lingers on in industrial centers and there's no chance of a cut in personal income tax. On top of this, Republican candidates suffered setbacks at the polls in both New Jersey and California.

All this adds up to sour and depressing political news for the Eisenhower Administration. Now, on top of everything, comes the matter involving Assistant President Sherman Adams which has left top important Republican members of Senate and House, candidates for election next November, screaming for Adams' scalp in tones much louder than their Democratic opponents.

Probably with good reason, the Democrats are being suspiciously moderate: they figure that they have got like himself out on a limb by his support of Adams and his "I need him" announcement and are counting on further revelations about the Adams-Goldfine relationship which will saw off the Presidential limb.